

Message Text

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43

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00

INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 SSM-03 AID-05

IO-13 /084 W

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O R 231611Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1569

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, LE

SUBJECT: EARLY REACTION TO HOUGHTON-MACK MISSION

1. ON SUNDAY, AUG 22, MOST BEIRUT PAPERS CARRIED FRONT-PAGE STORIES ANNOUNCING ARRIVAL OF HOUGHTON AND MACK IN JOUNIEH. REPORTING IN MOST PAPERS REPEATED EXPLANATION IN DEPT'S ANNOUNCEMENT, BUT L'ORIENT LE JOUR ADDED SPECULATION THAT MISSION WAS "EFFORT BY U.S. TO REVIVE ITS DIPLOMATIC ACTIVITY ON LEBANESE SCENE AT A TIME WHEN LEBANESE FRONT SUCCESSES ON THE GROUND RAISE IN NEW TERMS THE QUESTION OF THE FUTURE OF THE COUNTRY."

2. ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS AUG 23, HOUGHTON AND MACK

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WENT TO KFOUR AT 0900 ON SUNDAY, AUG 22 TO SEE FRANGIE, BUT

HE HAD LEFT FOR NORTH LEBANON. THEY THEN MET FOR TWO HOURS WITH SHEIKH MICHAEL KHOURY, DESCRIBED AS AN OLD FRIEND OF MR. HOUGHTON'S, IN GHAZIR. AT NOON, ACCORDING TO AN-NAHAR, HOUGHTON AND MACK WERE JOINED BY SECURITY DETAIL FROM "GUARDIANS OF THE CEDARS" AND ESCORTED TO HAZMIEH, WHERE THEY MET WITH PRESIDENT-ELECT SARKIS FOR TWO HOURS FOR GENERAL DISCUSSION OF LEBANESE CRISIS. AT THREE, HOUGHTON AND MACK RETURNED TO THEIR HOTEL, THE MONTEMAR, WHERE AN-NAHAR REPORTER INTERVIEWED THEM. HOUGHTON, ACCORDING TO REPORTER, STRESSED THAT THEY HAD COME NOT TO PROPOSE SOLUTIONS BUT TO EXCHANGE IDEAS WITH LEBANESE LEADERS AND THAT NO SCHEDULE OF APPOINTMENTS HAD YET BEEN FIXED. ARTICLE GOES ON TO SAY THAT DORY CHAMOUN CALLED AT HOTEL ABOUT 1840 FOR DISCUSSION WITH AMERICAN DELEGATION THAT LASTED UNTIL 2100. AN-NAHAR SPECULATES THAT ARRIVAL OF THE TWO ENVOYS SIGNALS NEW AMERICAN EFFORT TO PLAY A POSITIVE ROLE IN SETTLEMENT OF THE LEBANESE CRISIS.

3. AT 1415 LOCAL AUG 23, KATAEB RADIO ANNOUNCED THAT PRESIDENT FRANGIE, ACCOMPANIED BY FORMER PRESIDENT CAMILLE CHAMOUN, HAD RECEIVED HOUGHTON AND MACK AT NOON THAT DAY AND THAT THEY HAD MET EARLIER WITH SHEIKH PIERRE GEMAYEL.

4. LOCAL REPRESENTATIVES OF WASHINGTON POST AND OF UPI QUERIED EMBASSY AUG 22 ON HOUGHTON/MACK VISIT AND UPI EXPRESSED INTEREST IN INTERVIEWING THEM.

5. DEPUTY MIKAEL DAHER (CLOSE TO RAYMOND EDDE) COMMENTED TO EMBOFF AUG 22 THAT MISSION WOULD SURELY GENERATE SPECULATION ABOUT POSSIBLE U.S. SUPPORT OF CHRISTIAN SIDE, AND DE FACTO PARTITION.
HUNT

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